Inverclyde council

Report To:	**Policy & Resources Committee**	**Date:**	**15 September 2020**
Report By:	**Chief Financial Officer**	**Report No:**	**FIN/75/20/AP/LA**
Contact Officer:	**Allan McDonald**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712098**
Subject:	**ICT Services Performance Update**		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This report details ICT Services response to the COVID-19 lockdown and provides updates the performance and Channel Shift statistics.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown ICT undertook a range of actions detailed in Section 5 of the report and worked with services to enable key workers to work from home or provide flexibility to enable new ways of delivering services.

2.2 Due to the nature of the services to be delivered it was a requirement to have the majority of Servicedesk personnel on-site for the duration of the lockdown periods. All other staff worked remotely, some on a rota between home and the office. The performance and dedication of the team over this unprecedented period has been of the highest standard.

2.3 Extra equipment and software has been procured and the costs met from the Covid budget allowance however it is likely that further one off and recurring costs will be requested as the new ICT Strategy is developed.

2.4 The ICT team is continuing to provide considerable support to schools in terms of replacing kit, the provision of 1,200 new laptops for pupils and to implement investment in Wi-Fi and connectivity approved by the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee.

2.5 It can be seen from Appendix 1 that there has been a noticeable shift in aspects of customer interaction with the Council during the Covid period. Face to face contacts have reduced considerably whilst phone and email contacts have increased. Allied to the launch of new on line services covered in the Customer Services report elsewhere in the agenda, it will be interesting to see the extent of any permanent channel shift over coming months.

2.6 Based on an assessment of the number of employees who work in this manner and the likelihood that this will continue into 2021 then it is requested that a further £100,000 is allocated to the £80,000 previously approved by Members. This will ensure that all employees carry out DSE assessments in their main places of work and are supplied with appropriate equipment.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee recognises the dedication and achievements of the ICT team throughout the Covid pandemic period to support Council Services.

3.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the performance and updates provided in the report.

3.3 It is recommended that the Committee approves the allocation of £100,000 to support flexible and homeworking over coming months whilst offices carry out a review of the current approach to home/flexible working and future office requirements.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The ICT service provides support across ICT hardware, software and security in the Council's Offices, Schools and Libraries. The parameters for this support and how users operate the system are supported by a number of ICT policies which are considered and approved by the Policy & Resources Committee.

4.2 ICT Services provides 6 main functions as part of its overall service:

- Servicedesk – Incident Response and Service request
- Server and System Support
- Network and Telecommunications
- Application Support and Development
- Project Management
- Cyber Security & Incident Response

4.3 In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown ICT implemented a number of steps detailed below and worked with services to enable key workers to work from home or provide flexibility to enable new ways of delivering services.

4.4 Due to the nature of the services to be delivered it was a requirement to have the majority of Servicedesk personnel on-site for the duration of the lockdown periods. All other staff worked remotely, some on a rota between home and the office.

5.0 ICT RESPONSE TO COVID-19

5.1 Across both Schools and Offices the majority of ICT equipment is desktop based, typically with a configuration of PC, monitor, keyboard and mouse. Most employees also have a fixed VOIP telephone handset. A number of staff in mainly customer facing roles or roles which require manipulation of large spreadsheets have a two monitor set-up.

5.2 On the corporate network there are a good number of staff issued with a laptop/docking station instead of a desktop PC. These tend to be officers who attend meetings at multiple locations or who are required to hot desk – such as a number of HSCP staff in Hector McNeil House.

5.3 In response to the announcements around moving to home working and ultimately following full lockdown, ICT began the process of enabling key staff to work from home. Services identified and prioritised staff and submitted lists to ICT via the ECRMT for the issuing of laptops and tablets for remote working. As the pandemic in China had already caused disruption to supply chains, ICT had to utilise a range of equipment ranging from new equipment in stock for the standard refresh, older equipment that had been returned for disposal following replacement and equipment borrowed from schools which had closed at that point.

5.4 Across Corporate and Education employees, 485 additional devices were allocated for home working, this included 161 for teaching and school support staff who required access from home. The remaining 324 were provided for home working for Corporate office based staff. This was in addition to the existing devices already configured for remote use. Additionally 29 staff who required specialist equipment and software were authorised to take desktop devices for home use.

5.5 As demand for home working grew the number of VPN (SonicWall/Aventail) licences quickly became insufficient for the number of staff home working. The Council had 250 VPN licences and had comfortably worked within that limit for several years. ICT immediately ordered an additional 250 licences however that quickly became insufficient and orders for 200 additional licences quickly followed. A system upgrade was also required prior to this significant increase in capacity.

5.6 As staff became accustomed to home working, the lack of telephony and the reliance on email as the only means of communication became an issue. The Council had existing Cisco Jabber desktop telephony licences available and ICT began the deployment of this across the Council to allow staff access to telephony at home. Meet-Me teleconferencing facilities were rolled out across the authority and a number of room based voice conference devices were procured to enable hybrid teleconferencing and meetings to be held.

5.7 Further requirement to participate in video conferencing was becoming evident. As the Council already used CISCO telephony products it had an opportunity to make use of a free licence for the WebEx Videoconferencing platform. Since formal implementation on 1 May there have now been over 3,000 meetings held, with 13,000 participants totalling almost 83 full days of meetings on the platform. In support of the Jabber and WebEx roll outs, ICT supplied over 500 headsets for use.

5.8 Although sufficient to allow staff to work from home and provide support during the initial lockdown period. It was identified that the older laptops initially deployed would need replaced and that the laptops on loan from the schools would have to be returned as the schools planned for reopening. An order for 355 laptops was placed and a programme to replace the school based laptops in time for schools reopening is almost complete. The backlog of orders outstanding since before lockdown is now being addressed and the replacement of older devices is being assessed in conjunction with services to plan a replacement programme.

5.9 Across all platforms the Council has seen significant increases in the tools required for home and remote working, including repurposed meeting room and pool laptops.

Active Devices	Pre-Covid	Post Covid	Cost
Laptops	808	1172	£144k
Tablets	106	126	£18.5k
Desktops	834	627	Stored for refresh

5.10 Existing projects are being re-evaluated to ensure that they will support new and flexible ways of working. Increasing online access to Council Services, implementing tools such as expanding electronic document management to allow remote access and improved workflow for teams working remotely.

5.11 Section 2 of Appendix 1 shows that calls to the servicedesk remained at similar or higher levels before, during and after lockdown. This was in addition to the work detailed above. Attainment levels remained at a similar level as prior to lockdown.

6.0 SUPPORT TO EDUCATION SERVICES

6.1 In order to support schools for the return of pupils, ICT technicians were located in schools to refresh 305 desktops PCs in Technical departments and replace the 108 school based devices issued to corporate users to allow them to work from home.

6.2 Laptops issued to teachers and other school based staff will be returned to schools and reimaged for classroom use by the end of August.

6.3 As reported previously 1,200 laptops (350 with 4G capability built-in) have been ordered and received for the use of pupils is support of the Connect Scotland programme to mitigate digital exclusion. More detail regarding this was reported to the Education & Communities Committee.

7.0 ICT AND DIGITAL STRATEGIES

7.1 It can be seen from Appendix 1 that there has been a noticeable shift in aspects of customer interaction with the Council during the Covid period. Face to face contacts have reduced considerably whilst phone and email contacts have increased. Allied to the launch of new on line services covered in the Customer Services report elsewhere in the agenda it will be interesting to see the extent of any permanent channel shift over coming months.

7.2 It can also be seen from the appendix that there has been a major reduction in face to face payments which includes payments received through the mail. This has understandably been driven by the closure of the cashier facility in the CSC and officers are closely montoring any impact on Council Tax and Sundry Debt Collection levels.

7.3 As covered in the Debt Recovery report elsewhere in the agenda, there has been an increase in Direct Debits which now make up 80% of all Council Tax payments.

7.4 The Committee is due to consider refreshed ICT and Digital Strategies over the next 6 months. The experience of service delivery to employees and the public over the Covid pandemic will be a significant factor when developing the refreshed strategies. The ICT Strategy in particular will be prepared in conjunction with a review of the experience of remote/home working during the pandemic and a review of the Council's future office requirements. This is a major piece of work and will be reported to Members as part of the consideration of the 2021/23 Budget.

7.5 In advance of consideration of the revised ICT Strategy there is a need to ensure that those employees who work at home or spend a reasonable proportion of their week working at home have the requisite equipment/furniture. Based on an assessment of the number of employees who work in this manner and the likelihood that this will continue into 2021 then it is requested that a further £100,000 is allocated to the £80,000 previously approved by Members. This will ensure that all employees carry out DSE assessments in their main places of work and are supplied with appropriate equipment.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One Off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
ICT	Equipment	20/21	100		Fund from the Covid budget allowance
ICT	Software	Aug20 – Aug21	40	Travel & Subsistence	For webex host licences for 12 months. Services to fund from savings in travel budgets

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

8.2 **Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8.3 **Human Resources**

All employee implications are detailed in the report..

8.4 **Equalities**

There was a full equalities impact assessment carried out when the initial ICT/Digital Strategies were prepared and as such an equalities impact assessment is not required at this time.

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

8.5 **Repopulation**

The provision of modern and responsive services will help promote the area and contribute towards stabilising the areas population.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS
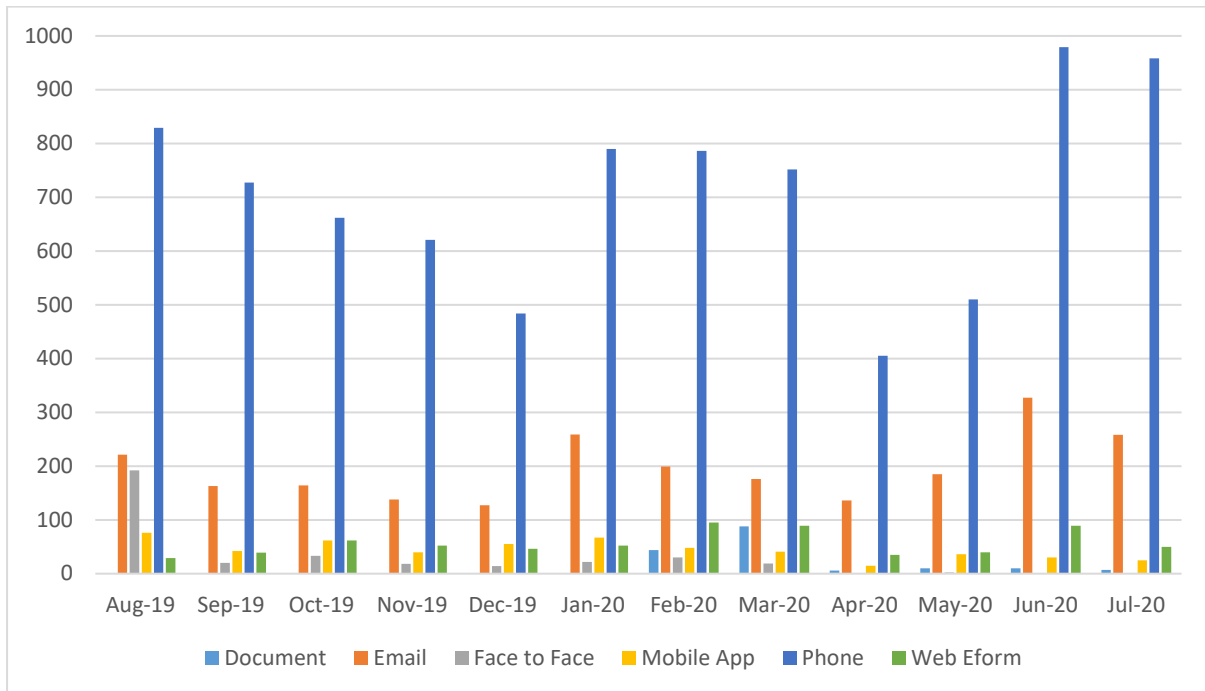
9.1 The CMT support the spend proposals in this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

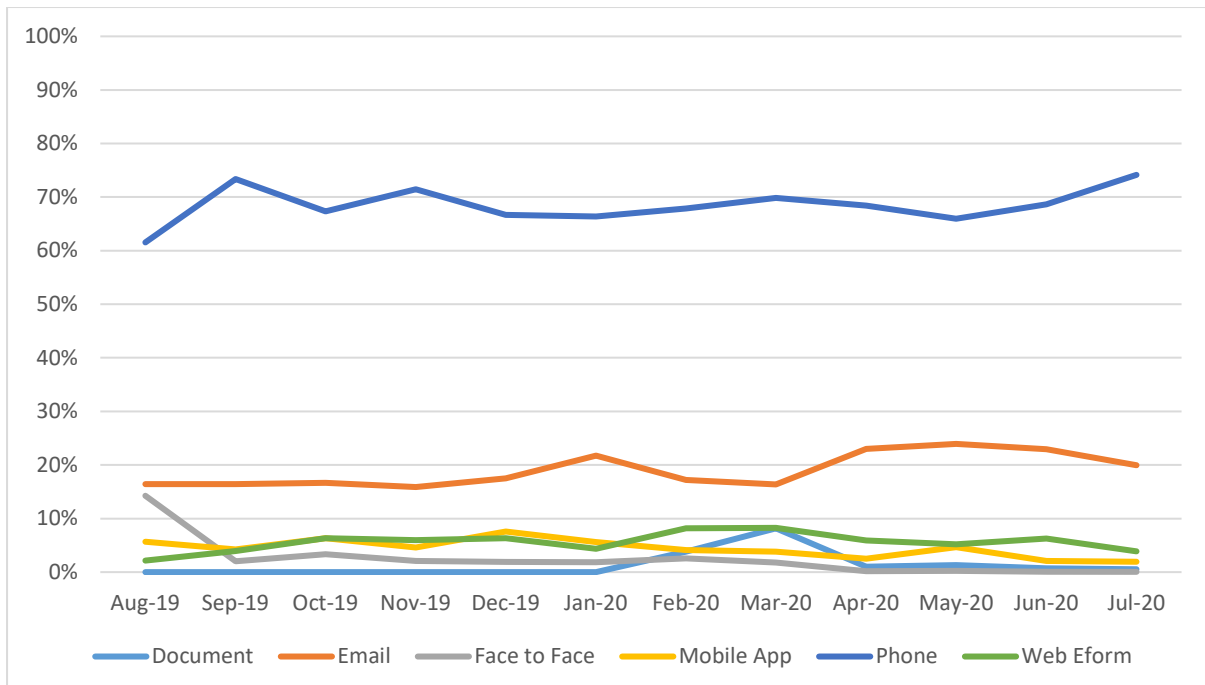10.1 Digital Strategy 2017 – 2020 and ICT Strategy 2017 - 2020

Appendix 1 – Performance Statistics – 31st July 2020

Section 1 – Channel Shift

1.1   Total Number of Requests by Channel

**1.2 Percentage of Requests by Channel – Trend**

Service report data : Abandoned Vehicles, Bins and Bags, Dog Fouling, Graffiti, Grounds Maintenance, Illegal Dumping & Fly Tipping, Potholes, Refuse Collection & Litter, Roads and Footpaths, Stair, lighting, Street & Traffic Lights, Street Cleaning, Uplifts, Winter Planning, Winter Planning Grit Bin, Winter Planning Pavements

Inbound emails only. New Category recorded from Feb 20 – Document. Web eform does not include Waste Permit requests.

1.3 Total Number of Payments by Channel
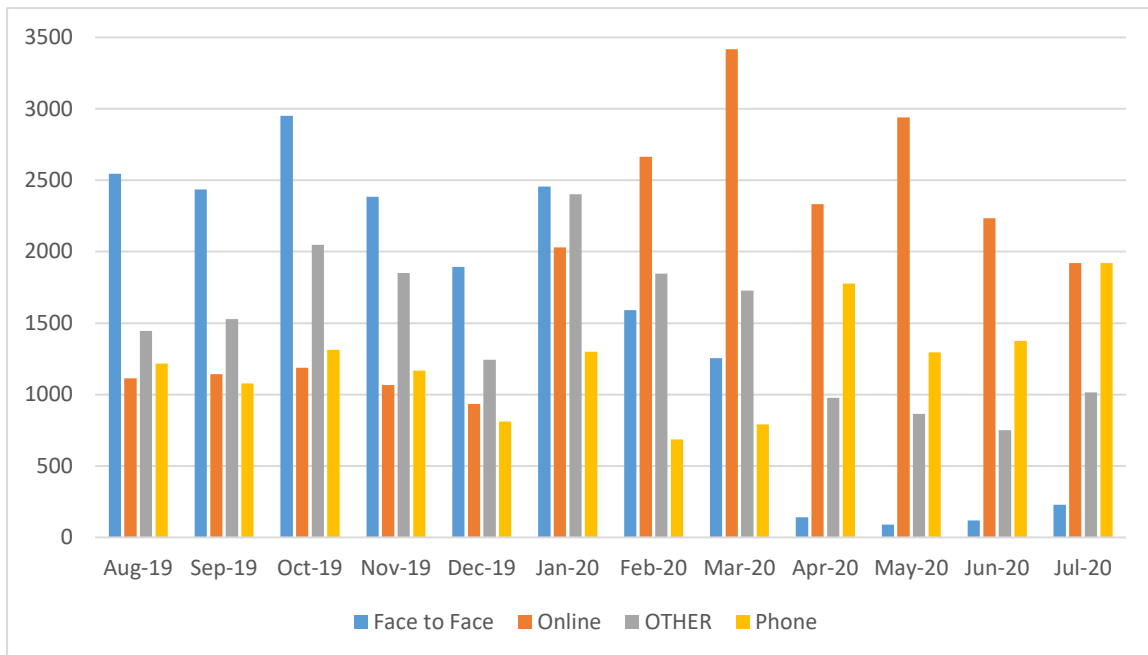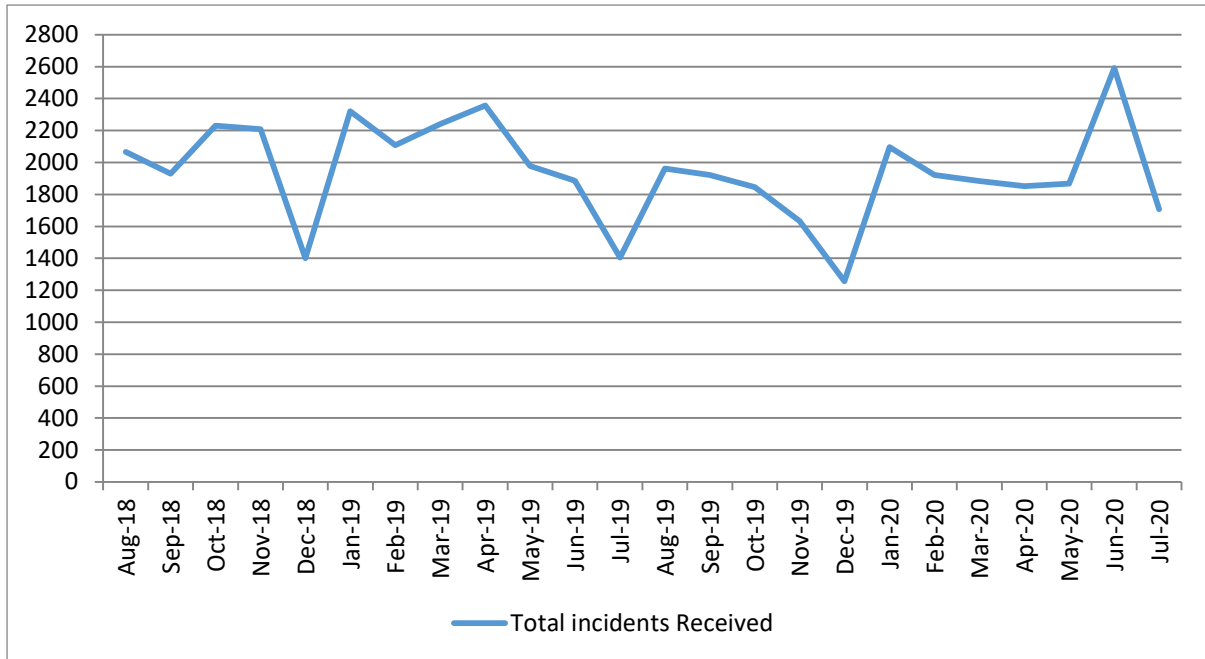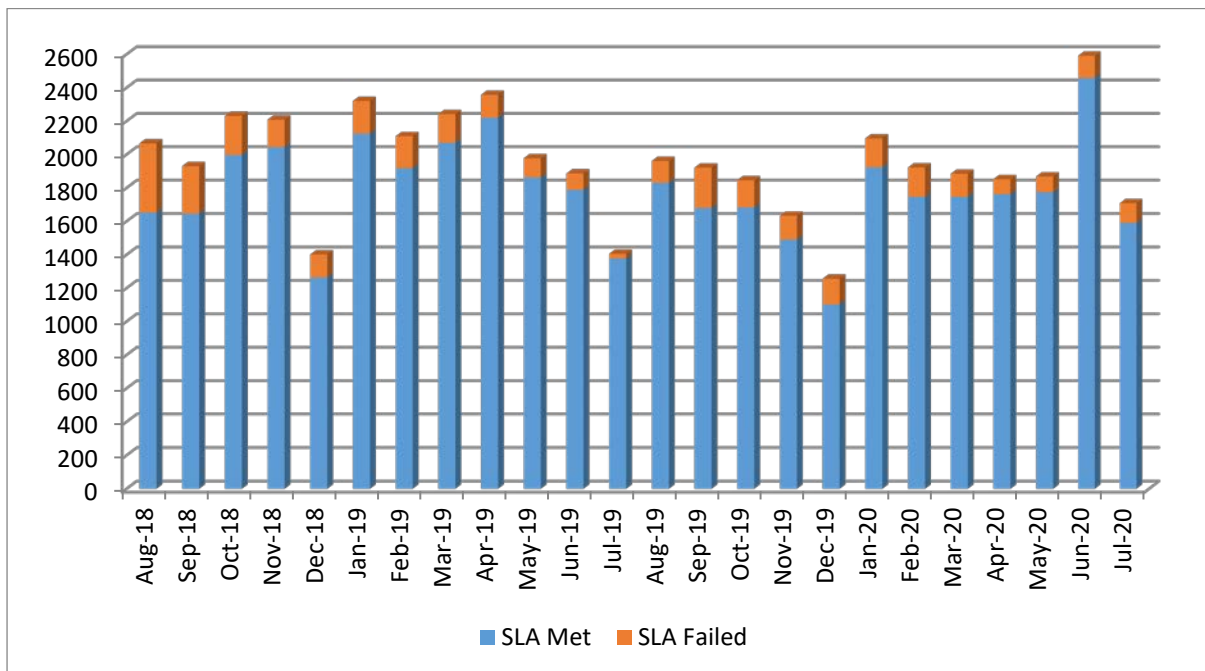

1.4 Percentage of Payments by Channel – Trend
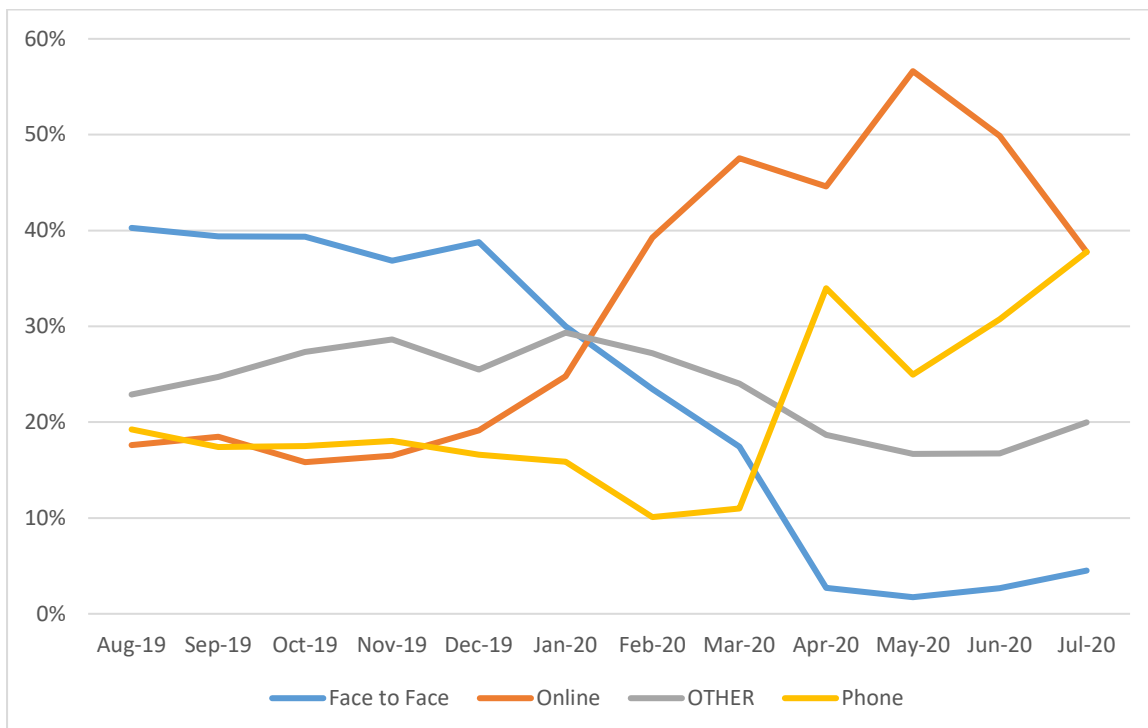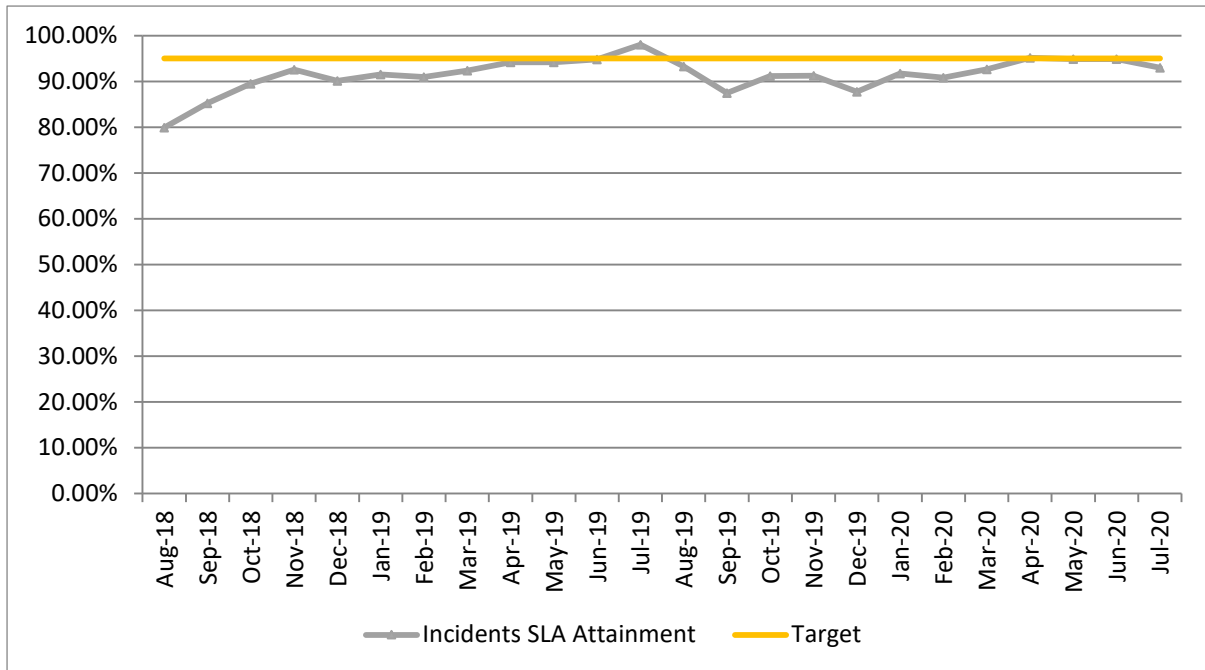
Section 2 - Servicedesk

2.1   Incidents

Incidents Received

2.1.1 - Incidents Met/Failed within SLA

2.1.2 - Monthly Service Level Attainment - Incidents

SLA Details

VIP Users

Priority	Target Resolution Time
Critical	3 hours
High	4 hours
Normal	7 hours
Low	21 hours
Long Term	No target

Standard Users

Priority	Target Resolution Time
Critical	4 hours
High	7 hours
Normal	21 hours
Low	35 hours
Long Term	No target

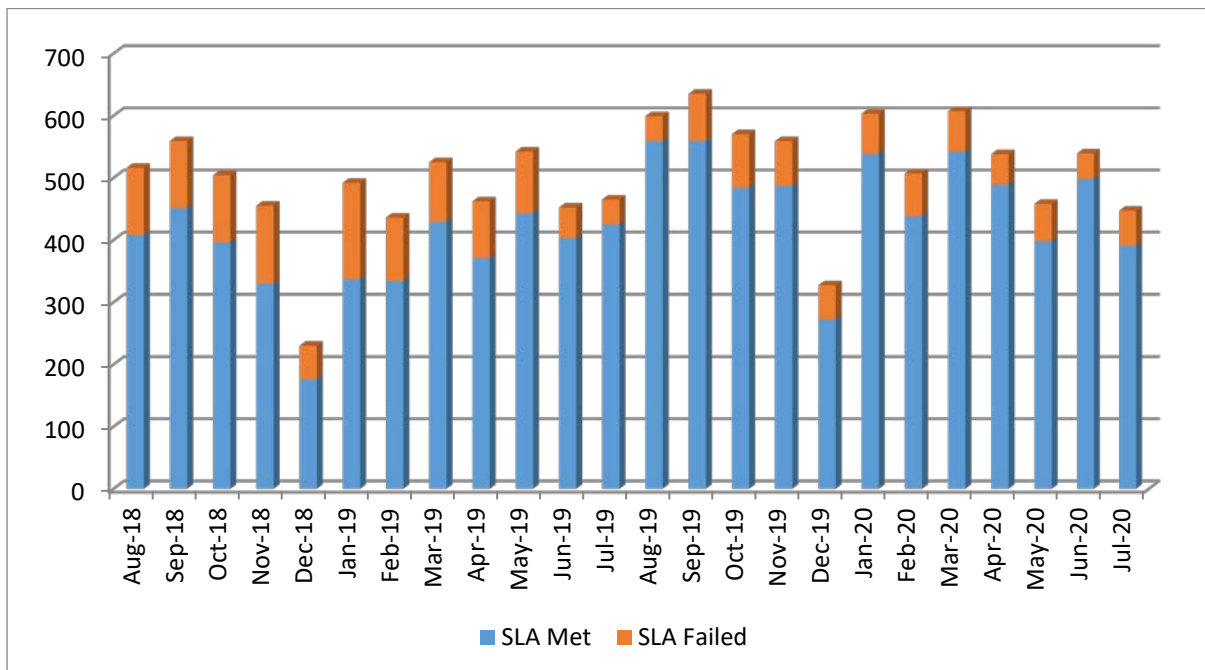SLA Attainment is 95% of incidents resolved within Target Resolution Time (90% until July 2017)

A typical Service request is unlocking a user account or password, software errors, PC faults, PDA, whiteboard and projector issues.
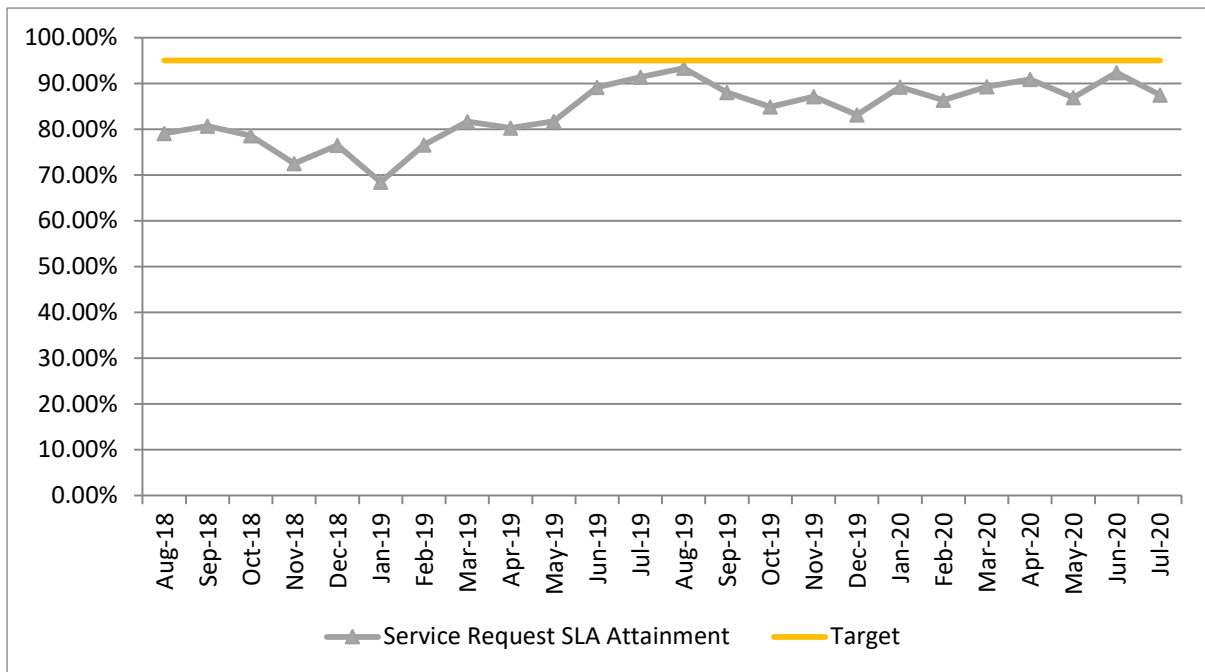
2.2 - Service Requests

2.2.1 - Service Requests Received
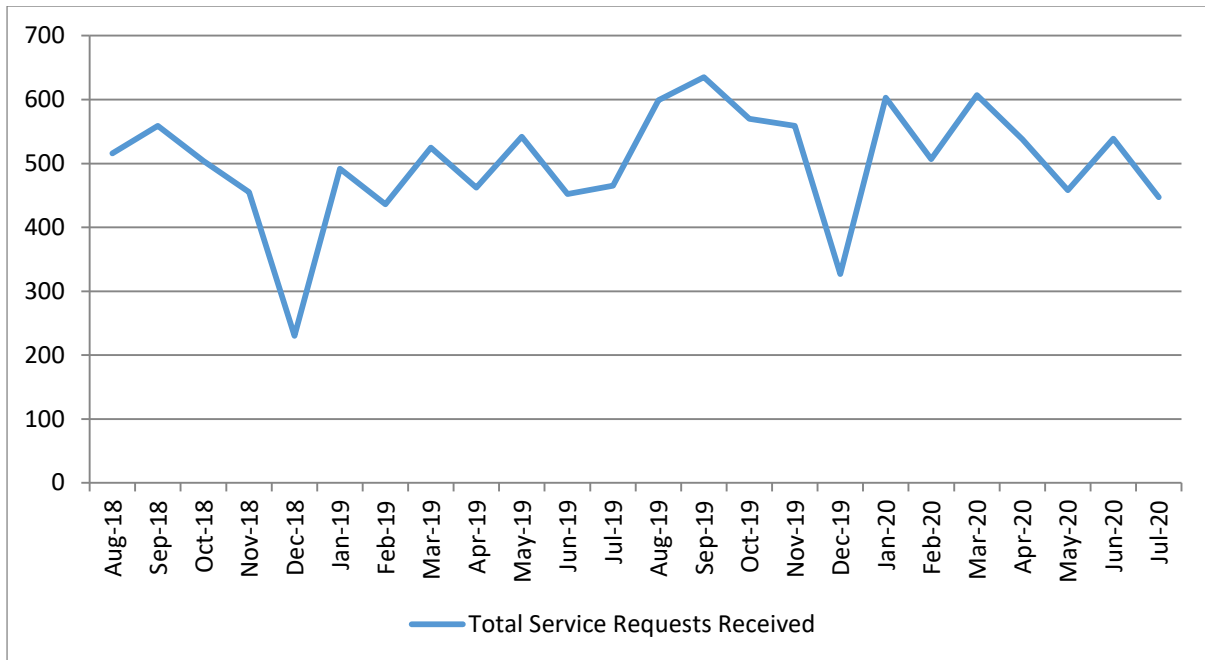
2.2.2 - Service Requests Met/Failed within SLA

2.2.3 - Service Level Attainment – Service Requests

SLA Attainment is 95% of incidents resolved within Target Resolution Time (90% until July 2017)

A typical Service request is provision of a new user account, a new PC or Laptop, relocation of existing services.